

It has approved approximately \$1 billion in loans to businesses surviving the destructive attacks by hurricanes in 2005.

In my district of Houston: 55 disaster home loans approved for \$727,000; 27 disaster business loans approved for \$1,750,800; 17 disaster economic injury loans approved for \$750,100; and 99 total disaster loans approved for \$3,227,900.

If one just looks at the agency's performance on the surface it would appear that agency is performing well. However, upon closer inspection, citing Louisiana as a case study, reports indicate that of the roughly 185,000 applications made on behalf of homeowners, a shocking 60,000 were denied. The SBA is distributing a large amount of aid, but that aid is not reaching all of those in serious need. This is evident by the House Minority Small Business Committee's statement that 80 percent of overall disaster loans have been denied.

My amendment requires of the Small Business Agency that no funds prohibit the approval of disaster loans at a rate of at least 70 percent. The destruction caused by the hurricanes occurred on an unprecedented scale, and the SBA should be approving disaster loans with unprecedented efficiency. SBA disaster loans offer people who have lost everything a chance to rebuild their life. It gives the survivors of Rita, Katrina and Wilma the hope that one day they can be contributing members of society.

Madam Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment, and continue to work on this matter to ensure that small business loans go to small business persons for them to be able to rebuild their lives throughout the gulf region, including the State of Texas.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the amendment is withdrawn.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. CONAWAY

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. CONAWAY:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by section 3010 for fiscal year 2006 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program may be used while there continues in effect a Federal prohibition on the exploration, leasing, development, or production of oil or natural gas in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or the Outer Continental Shelf.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Chairman, I reserve a point of order on the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. A point of order is reserved. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Chairman, I rise tonight to support an amendment that would address what I believe is a hypocrisy that permeates a very im-

portant area of national policy. Section 3010 of this bill will pull funding for LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, from fiscal 2007 into fiscal 2006. The idea is that certain low income folks need help with high fuel prices, high home heating fuel bills or just home heating bills in general.

The reason we have high bills is a lack of supply of crude oil and natural gas. While we have this lack of supply, it is because we have not drilled in certain areas, which I believe will provide prolific reserves that would address the energy costs.

None of us like these high energy prices we are experiencing. There are no short-term solutions. But the most immediate impact we can have open prices is to drill in areas where we have reserves. These areas include the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve, as well as the outer continental shelf.

There have been many attempts, throughout my short time I have been here, to open up these areas to drilling. The drilling contractors, the operators today so, can do so in an environmentally sensitive way and a responsible way, and it is hypocritical of us to, on the one hand, ask the taxpayers of this country to underwrite the high energy bills, and then, on the other hand, restrict supply that, in fact, drives up those costs.

So my amendment would say that none of the LIHEAP money would be available as long as we maintain restrictions on drilling in ANWR as well as the outer continental shelf.

Another point, as to the safety of the drilling in these areas, if you look at the experience we had as a result of Hurricane Katrina, you cannot imagine, you cannot formulate a worse natural disaster in the Gulf of Mexico as it relates to the producing and drilling platforms than we had in the gulf that was Hurricane Katrina. You just cannot imagine anything worse than that.

As a result of the great engineering, the hard work of many men and women throughout this industry, there was not one oil spill, one natural gas spill as a result of Hurricane Katrina sweeping through there and destroying the surface equipment. All of the sub-surface protections that are put in place to protect against that eventuality did in fact work. I think the idea that we can't do so, we can't drill offshore safely and responsibly has, in my mind, not played out.

So I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment to address what I believe is a hypocritical position in national policy.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Chairman, let me say how much I appreciate the cooperation of Mr. CONAWAY this evening. He has been helpful at every end of our business. But in the meantime, I have this responsibility that causes me to make a

point of order against the amendment, because it proposes to change existing law and constitutes legislation on appropriations bill and, therefore, violates clause 2 of rule XXI. The rule states in pertinent part an amendment to a general appropriations bill shall not be in order if it changes existing law.

In this case, this amendment imposes additional duties.

So, Madam Chairman, I ask for a ruling.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Does any Member wish to be heard on the point of order?

If not, the Chair will rule. The Chair finds that this amendment includes language requiring a new determination of the Federal official who oversees the LIHEAP program. The amendment, therefore, constitutes legislation in violation of clause 2 of rule XXI.

The point of order is sustained and the amendment is not in order.

□ 2230

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Chairman, while I respectfully disagree, I accept the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY) having assumed the chair, Mrs. DRAKE, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4939) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken tomorrow.

MAKING AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR THE LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2320) to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 2320

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FUNDS FOR LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 9001 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 is amended—